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General Assembly
Seventy-first session

Official Records

90th plenary meeting
Thursday, 6 July 2017, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Thomson ..... (Fiji)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda items 19 and 73 (*continued*)

Sustainable development

Oceans and the law of the sea

(a) Oceans and the law of the sea

Draft resolution (A/71/L.74)

The President: Last month, United Nations Headquarters in New York experienced the extraordinary energies of the Ocean Conference. Thousands of participants from across science, civil society, Government, multilateral organizations and the private sector gathered to forge a global movement in support of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 — the ocean Goal. Global consciousness has now been raised about the oceans' problems to such a degree that none of us can say any longer that we are unaware of the extent of the trouble we have brought upon the ocean. With the many solutions and remedial actions identified at the Conference, a breakthrough has come in the form of a long-sought turning point in the restoration to humankind of a relationship of respect and balance with the ocean.

The Conference proved to be an affirmation of our deep concern about the effects of human activity on our shared environment. It served as further proof that the great mass of humankind and the Governments that lead us remain united in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Climate Change Agreement and that we are determined to see them implemented in fidelity to the fundament that sustains us.

The Ocean Conference produced three ambitious key outcomes. First, the seven partnership dialogues outlined every detail of the truth about the current state of the ocean by presenting the best available scientific evidence. Participants in the dialogues responded by putting forward effective solutions to those problems, and we have captured those solutions.

Secondly, nearly 1,400 voluntary commitments were made by Governments, the United Nations system, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders, notifying us of the practical remedial actions they will be taking to realize the targets of SDG 14.

Thirdly, the Conference adopted the "Our ocean, our future: call for action" document that we have before us today (A/71/L.74). By that call for action, Governments reaffirm their commitment to conserving and sustainably using the ocean and its resources. We have highlighted the actions needed to achieve the SDG 14 targets and made a firm call for appropriate follow-up on the implementation of our ocean commitments.

Taken together, those three outcomes constitute a massive work plan for us all if we are to ensure that the ocean Goal is successfully implemented. As we move forward together in this great task, we are fortified by the global energy and resources generated by the Ocean Conference. Where the ocean is concerned, there is no them and us, no division between the public and the private sector, North and South, East and West. The

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ocean unites us. Is it the common heritage of humankind and our ultimate home.

In a welcome development at the Conference, Kenya and Portugal offered to host a second United Nations Ocean Conference in 2020, to serve as the next key moment for assessing and adjusting our progress towards the full implementation of SDG 14 in time for the Goal's targets to reach maturity by 2030.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank and congratulate the Governments of Sweden and Fiji, as co-Presidents of the Conference; the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Wu Hongbo; the Special Adviser to the co-Presidents, Mr. Serpa Soares; the United Nations system, which so ably supported them all; and all those who made the Conference such a success. I would like to express special thanks to the Permanent Representatives of Portugal and Singapore, who were instrumental in finalizing the document that is presented here this morning for the General Assembly's endorsement.

Through the Ocean Conference, we have truly begun the process of reversing the cycle of decline that human activity has brought upon the ocean. By adopting the call for action today we will signal our determination to maintain the momentum launched at the Ocean Conference. From here we must move to the High-level Political Forum, where these outcomes will be discussed in further detail next week. We move forward with the dogged determination required of us to achieve the targets of SDG 14. We must restore humankind's relationship of respect and balance with the Ocean.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/71/L.74, entitled " Our ocean, our future: call for action".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/71/L.74?

Draft resolution A/71/L.74 was adopted (resolution 71/312).

The President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of position, may I remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by representatives from their seats.

Mr. Daunivalu (Fiji): I would like to make a brief statement following the adoption of the call for action document. In making this statement, I align myself with the statement to be delivered shortly by the Permanent Representative of Solomon Islands on behalf of the Pacific small island developing States.

My delegation commends the General Assembly for its consensus adoption of the Ocean Conference call for action (resolution 71/312). That political declaration is an important outcome of the high-level United Nations Ocean Conference. It represents our leaders' political commitment to the full implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14. It outlines for the international community the actions to be taken in order to make a reality of the aims of SDG 14 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. With it, we have in our hands a political mandate and road map for fleshing out the various targets under the ocean Goal.

The adoption today of the call for action also represents a significant step forward for humankind in preserving our planet's ecosystem. Together with the thousands of voluntary commitments pledged, we are well on our way to restoring the ocean's health and in turn increasing humankind's chances of surviving and maintaining its livelihood for both the immediate and the long term.

As a co-President of the Ocean Conference with the Deputy Prime Minister of Sweden, Fiji's Prime Minister was very pleased with the high level of engagement and active participation in the Conference by States Members of the United Nations and other non-State participants. My delegation would therefore like to echo my Prime Minister's words of appreciation to all delegations and stakeholders for the very positive and constructive spirit in which our work was carried out over the past year so as to enable us to achieve such great results. We also want to thank the facilitators of the call-for-action document, the Permanent Representatives of Singapore and Portugal, for their sterling efforts to hold true to the mandates of the modalities resolution for the Conference (resolution 70/303). They helped us to produce what is indeed a consensus, concise, focused and intergovernmentally agreed declaration to support the implementation of Goal 14.

On behalf of the Presidents of the Conference, we would also like to express our appreciation for the invaluable support from the United Nations system and the advisory group during the past year. Needless to say, the Presidents' ability to discharge their responsibility for the Conference would not have been so successful without a well-oiled, cohesive, supportive Secretariat

team. We therefore wish to convey our Government's special thanks to the Secretariat staff for all the guidance and support provided throughout.

I have one final point to make. It was pointed out by the Presidents during the closing of the Ocean Conference that our work regarding the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 has only just begun, and we echo those sentiments here and therefore welcome the Assembly's adoption today of the call-for-action document. In that regard, we also welcome the announcement by the Governments of Kenya and Portugal that they will be hosting the next Ocean Conference, as we press on to fully implement Sustainable Development Goal 14 by 2030. For the immediate term, we look forward to following up and reviewing the progress of our work on Goal 14 at the High-level Political Forum later this month and in future sessions.

Mr. Sisilo (Solomon Islands): I have the honour to deliver this explanation of position following the adoption of the United Nations Oceans Conference call for action (resolution 71/312) on behalf of the 12 Pacific small island developing States.

At the outset, I would like to offer our congratulations and heartfelt thanks to the Presidents of the United Nations Ocean Conference, the Prime Minister of Fiji and the Deputy Prime Minister of Sweden, as well as to the facilitators of the consultations on the call for action, the Permanent Representatives of Singapore and Portugal.

The call for action represents an important accomplishment for all of us, especially the Pacific small island developing States. As we have said repeatedly throughout the process, and take this opportunity to reiterate once again, our group's geographic composition is more than 98 per cent ocean. The ocean is therefore the indispensable foundation of our very existence and sustainable development. Given the importance of the ocean to our islands, we are heartened by the fact that the call for action contains appropriate references to small island developing States and least-developed countries. We are also heartened by the level of ambition that this document reflects. As the mounting threats to the health of our ocean reach critical tipping points, the actions that world leaders have committed to could not be more timely.

Furthermore, given the increasing impact of climate change on the ocean, we also welcome the recognition in the call for action of the importance of the Paris Climate Change Agreement to ensuring the health, productivity and resilience of our ocean. But we stress that the call for action is a catalyst for our work, not a conclusion to it. Together with the 1,400 volunteer commitments made at the Ocean Conference, we must undertake the necessary actions to ensure that the political ambition it represents is not lost. This moment is a launching point to ensure that we move towards the full and timely implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14. We look forward to following up and reviewing the progress that has been made at the High-level Political Forum later this month. Furthermore, we welcome and support Kenya and Portugal's commitment to hosting a successful Ocean Conference.

Ms. Pierce (United States of America): The United States joined the consensus on resolution 71/312, which endorses the call-for-action outcome document adopted on 9 June at the close of the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14. In doing so, we reaffirm the statements and clarifications made by Ambassador Bolton at the adoption of the call for action and stress that the United States does not support the reference to the transfer of technology in paragraph 12 and dissociates itself from the language of sub-paragraph (p) of paragraph 13, which refers to World Trade Organization negotiations and special and differential treatment.

Ms. Elgarf (Egypt): Egypt wishes to thank the facilitators of the intergovernmental negotiation of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 on the commendable efforts they exerted in trying to forge consensus on this outcome document, known as the call for action (resolution 71/312).

Egypt was pleased to join the consensus on this important document, for we know full well the importance of our joint action to take steps to implement Sustainable Development Goal 14, just as we must make similar efforts to implement the entire 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Nonetheless, Egypt would like to note that, in order to proceed effectively with the call for action, we must ensure that we do so on a solid basis of fact. In that regard, we note regretfully that the language in sub-paragraph (g) of paragraph 13 of the outcome document before us does not meet that standard of factual accuracy. We are concerned about the language in sub-paragraph (g) that

implies that invasions of alien species result only from human-related activities in the ocean and on marine life. That is factually incorrect when there are other, equally widespread and more chronic causes, chief of which is the adverse effect of climate change on the marine environment.

With that in mind, Egypt would like to express its full reservations about sub-paragraph (g) of paragraph 13 of the call for action. We do not consider its language factually correct, and it does not reflect our consent to working on its basis in future. We would also like to request that this reservation be part of the official record.

Ms. Melikbekyan (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian delegation would like to express its gratitude to the organizers of the Conference and its Presidents for their efforts in convening such a large-scale event on such an important topic. We would also like to highlight the contributions of the President of the General Assembly and his Office, as well as the coordinators of the negotiation process, the Permanent Representatives of Portugal and Singapore. The discussions during the Conference enabled us to address a range of issues on the preservation and good use of oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

We would like to comment on sub-paragraph (p) of paragraph 13 of the call to action, which has to do with fisheries subsidies. We do not fully agree with the approach set forth. In our view, we should consider the fact that the issue is sensitive and multifaceted, and that there are no easy solutions that can apply in all cases. A discussion among experts on the issue should be conducted within the World Trade Organization, which is the relevant body for that topic. We can discuss this issue further in the appropriate forum. Our delegation will therefore take a step back from that particular wording in that sub-paragraph.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position on this item. May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 73?

It was so decided.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 19.

Agenda items 13 and 117 (*continued*)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Draft resolution (A/71/L.75)

The President: The draft resolution before us (A/71/L.75), entitled "Work of the Statistical Commission pertaining to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", presented by the delegation of Brazil, is another critical milestone on the road to 2030. The development of the global indicator framework was mandated under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a means of monitoring the implementation of the Agenda's 17 Goals and 169 Targets. On behalf of the entire General Assembly, I commend the United Nations Statistical Commission, the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goals Indicators and the Statistics Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs for their mammoth efforts in preparing the framework. Aided by international organizations, civil society, academia and the private sector, they succeeded in developing a robust, comprehensive and flexible indicator framework. The framework was agreed to by the Statistical Commission in March and subsequently adopted by the Economic and Social Council in early June.

The framework will greatly assist decision makers in understanding which interventions are working and which are falling short. It will help the international community to determine which countries or regions are pressing ahead under the 2030 Agenda and which require additional support. It will also help all of us to measure what we truly value, to keep our promise to leave no one behind and, most important, to ensure accountability for the lofty commitments made in September 2015. To be of maximum value, the framework will have to be accompanied by an ambitious programme of capacity-building and by the embracing of new, innovative tools to support data collection and dissemination. Let us set our minds and muscle to what lies ahead.

With the adoption of draft resolution A/71/L.75, the issue last week of the Secretary-General's report on reforming the United Nations development system,

the ongoing consultations aimed at aligning the work of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the holding next week of the High-level Political Forum, the global architecture required to support SDG implementation appears to be progressing in the right direction. I commend the draft resolution to the Assembly for its adoption.

I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil to introduce draft resolution A/71/L.75.

Mr. De Azevedo Araujo Filho (Brazil): Brazil is proud and pleased to present, for adoption by the General Assembly, draft resolution A/71/L.75, entitled "Work of the Statistical Commission pertaining to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". Its main objective is to formally adopt the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a voluntary country-led structure for following up and reviewing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Brazil has long been an active player in discussions about sustainable development in the multilateral arena. In 1992, our country hosted a United Nations Conference on Environment and Development — the Earth Summit. Its seminal outcomes gave birth, among other things, to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity. Two decades later, 189 Member States and more than 30,000 civil society representatives met again in Rio de Janeiro to discuss the future of sustainable development.

In the outcome document (resolution 66/288) of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want", we agreed that achieving sustainable development is a universal undertaking. Developing and developed countries alike would have to follow a specific road map with a view to attaining sustainable development in its three dimensions. That road map became the Sustainable Development Goals, and the SDGs were agreed on two years later, in 2014, after an inclusive and transparent intergovernmental process. One year after that, the SDGs were integrated into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to form its core.

The adoption of the SDG global indicator framework can be considered the last step in the construction of the first universal development framework in the history of the United Nations. It provides Member States and the United Nations development system with complete metrics and methodologies for gathering and analysing data on the implementation of the SDGs. It is flexible in nature and its content will be updated periodically to reflect our changing world.

Brazil is proud to have chaired the United Nations Statistical Commission during the formulation of the global indicator framework. We are deeply grateful for the constructive engagement of all delegations, which made this breakthrough possible. The positive impact of the SDGs, which can already be felt in our societies as well as our Governments, gives us reason to believe that a sustainable world can be achieved in the coming years. Brazil will do its utmost to continue to contribute to make our economies, societies and ecosystems sustainable for present and future generations.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/71/L.75.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/71/L.75?

Draft resolution A/71/L.75 was adopted (resolution 71/313).

The President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of position, may I remind delegations that, in accordance with decision 34/40, explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mrs. Arrieta Munguia (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to welcome today's adoption of resolution 71/313, because its global indicator framework is a major step forward in our efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As you rightly said, Mr. President, we want to commend the United Nations Statistical Commission for its work and that of all the experts involved. We salute Brazil's leadership and would particularly like to request that, when future such issues are being negotiated in this Hall, enough time is always allowed for consultations with Member States. We had Brazil's flexibility to help ensure that the resolution could be adopted in the same form in the Assembly as it was in the Statistical Commission and the Economic and Social Council. We support this extremely important event and simply wish to state formally that it is important that Member States have sufficient lead time to ensure that in future they can familiarize themselves with the draft texts in

advance so as to be able to discuss them and adopt them by consensus.

Ms. Messmer Mokhtar (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland welcomes and fully supports today's adoption of resolution 71/313, entitled "Work of the Statistical Commission pertaining to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". The resolution gives the United Nations Statistical Commission a clear mandate until the year 2030. Switzerland views it as an important step in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, since its adoption of the global indicator framework is crucial to the global follow-up to the 2030 Agenda. However, the Statistical Commission should refine the indicators every year and subject them to a comprehensive review in 2020 and 2025.

Today's resolution covers not only the global indicator framework but other necessary elements for collecting the data needed to produce all the indicators. First, the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data defines the areas where additional investment is required, and thereby enables statisticians to establish priorities. Secondly, the resolution also emphasizes the fact that national statistical systems' official statistics and data represent an essential foundation for the global indicator framework. It also acknowledges the need to use unofficial data when nothing else is available. In our view, a third important element is the relationship it describes between the statistical and political communities, which regularly exchange information every year at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

In conclusion, with our adoption of today's resolution, we are assigning to the official statistical community and the United Nations Statistical Commission, which represents it, the leadership role needed for the global coordination of all the relevant activities. The second United Nations World Data Forum, to be held in October 2018, is the next phase of that process. Switzerland welcomes the opportunity to work with the General Assembly on this important issue.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position following the adoption of resolution 71/313.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 13 and 117. Agenda item 115 (*continued*)

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(k) Confirmation of the appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

Note by the Secretary-General (A/71/936)

The President: Members will recall that, by its decision 67/419, of 10 June 2013, the General Assembly, on the proposal of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, confirmed the appointment of Mr. Mukhisa Kituyi as Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development for a term of office of four years, beginning on 1 September 2013 and ending on 31 August 2017. In paragraph 2 of his note, the Secretary-General proposes to confirm the appointment of Mr. Mukhisa Kituyi as Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development for a further four-year term of office, beginning on 1 September 2017 and ending on 31 August 2021.

May I take it that the General Assembly, on the proposal of the Secretary-General, wishes to confirm the appointment of Mr. Mukhisa Kituyi as Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development for a further four-year term of office, beginning on 1 September 2017 and ending on 31 August 2021?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (k) of agenda item 115?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.